

EPA News Release

01-03X

September 6, 2001

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EPA Orders Truck Repair Facilities To Pay Penalties For Oil Dumping

Practice – Banned since 1984 – Can Threaten Drinking Water

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that it has ordered Cummins Northwest, Inc. and Myrmo Sons, Inc. of Bend, Oregon, to pay penalties for illegally disposing of waste motor oil and other motor vehicle waste fluids directly underground and potentially into underground drinking water sources.

EPA inspectors visited each company's facilities on August 23, 2000, and observed the use of drilled boreholes to dispose of waste motor oil and other motor vehicle waste fluids at the Myrmo and Cummins sites. All wells had been used for daily waste fluid disposal for at least the past five years.

The practice of disposing of waste motor oil and other motor vehicle waste fluids into injection wells, e.g., dry wells, drainfields, sewage drain holes, and sumps, has been banned in Oregon since 1984, and a nationwide prohibition came into effect last year. Because of the severely limited resources provided to the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to implement its Underground Injection Control program, the EPA is taking these legal actions. EPA seeks \$11,000 from Myrmo & Sons and \$13,000 from Cummins Northwest. EPA also seeks to require both facilities to close the illegal wells and clean up the contamination they caused.

Motor vehicle wastes fluids such as waste oil, diesel fuel, and parts cleaners, contain petroleum products, which are frequently disposed of in illegal injection wells and can migrate to nearby ground water sources. When ingested, water contaminated with petroleum products can cause severe, if not fatal effects: Short-term, acute exposures can cause central nervous system and/or kidney failure, while long-term exposure can cause liver, kidney and/or skin cancer.

Automotive repair facilities historically have used injection wells for waste disposal, but since the 1984 Oregon ban and the 2000 federal ban, facilities are required to cease injection and to employ safe, alternate disposal methods. The most common alternative is to connect all garage bay drains to the sanitary sewer. In addition, many new vehicle repair shops are running "dry shops" which means they use absorbent materials to clean up spills rather washing down the floor with soap and water. Once used, the absorbent materials can be swept up and thrown away as regular garbage. Due to this newly identified gap in compliance, the EPA will continue inspections of this type of facility and will take enforcement action where violations are discovered.

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